

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 07 February 2008.

PRESENT:

Councillor Tumilty (Hartlepool Borough Council), Councillor Budd (Middlesbrough Council), Councillor S Clarke (Redcar & Cleveland) and Councillor Mrs Womphrey (Stockton-on –Tees Borough Council).

OFFICIALS:

G Jarritt (Hartlepool Borough Council), K Campbell, C Mellor and D Tyrell (Middlesbrough Council), J Richardson (Redcar & Cleveland Council) and D McDonagh (Stockton-on-tees Borough Council).

PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group) and M Storey

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 12 September 2008 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

TEESSIDE ARCHIVES ACTION PLAN 2007- 2010

The Head of Libraries and Information presented a report detailing the Teesside Archives Action Plan for 2007 - 2010. It was explained that the inspection regime that was formerly conducted to ensure improvements against the recommendations was replaced in part with an annual self-assessment that was scored by the National Archives. The feedback from this assessment informed the Archives Action Plan.

The 2001/02 inspection highlighted many areas of concern regarding the governance and performance of Teesside Archives. The main area for concern was the lack of capacity for improvement. The inspection report led to the development of a five-year action plan covering 2002 - 07.

The outstanding actions to be taken were:-

- i.) The expansion of the storage facilities
- ii.) The instillation of a computerised management system

It was explained that self-assessments were implemented on an annual basis. The service had been scored as a two-star service in both the 2006 and the 2007 assessments with scores of 56% and 66% respectively.

The analysis from the 2007 self-assessment revealed that the main improvements revolved around accessibility, both in the physical and the virtual sense.

Details of the priorities of the Action Plan included Governance Management, customer responsiveness, Searchroom Services, preservation and conservation issues and learning and access projects.

The priorities of Governance Management were to identify potential sources of income and to implement a formal staff-training plan.

Community engagement was an area to be looked into, from direct consultation to access and awareness. Actions ranged from updating the website to replacing the platform for disabled access.

Searchroom Services would prioritise the need for a customer service standard, which would be related to the time taken to undertake tasks. It would be intended that once a benchmark be established, local indicators would be set to monitor capacity and inform improvement.

The preservation and conservation priorities included digitisation and completion of a collection care strategy.

Learning and Access projects would cover the promotional work of the service and would be the area most dependent on grant funding. Planned projects included the creation of an educational room within Exchange House, the extension of the Parks Places for all projects across the four boroughs, and a Learning Links Teacher placement.

Following the presentation of the report, a discussion ensued concerning the potential for funding for the creation of extra space for archived material. It was stated that various options were available from refurbishment of existing premises to re-location and new build. With regards to funding streams, it was stated that whilst current possible funding would be explored, the Council would be looking to prepare for funding streams available in three to four years (following the Olympics).

A discussion ensued regarding signposts within the town, notifying the public of the Archives building. The Chair suggested that more signposts needed to be displayed in order to encourage the public to use the service. It was agreed that the issue would be looked into. It was also stated that the location of the building with regards to the rest of the town would change with the developments at the Middlehaven site. As the Middlehaven site would develop, the building would be at the centre of town and not on the periphery.

At this point in the meeting it was highlighted that Redcar & Cleveland had not yet made the payment due to the Archives contribution fund. The Member representing Redcar & Cleveland requested that an invoice be sent to the Council and that she would follow up the issue following the meeting.

ORDERED

That the Action Plan for 2007 – 2010 be approved.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2007 – 2008

The Head of Libraries and Information provided an update on performance for 2007 – 2008 and to seek approval for retention of the current local indicators.

The annual self-assessment was completed earlier that year and it received a two star performance, which was the same outcome as the 2006 – 2007 result. It was explained that although the star rating was the same as the previous annual assessment, the actual score had increased by 10% from 56% to 66%.

When compared to the North East region and UK average scores of 61.5% and 58% respectively, Teesside Archives measured up well with a score above the regional and national standard.

The Committee was informed that the weakest section of the review was related to buildings, security and environment. It was explained that the reason for this was due to a conflict between security and accessibility, and therefore a lower score for this was acceptable.

There were two local indicators for 2007 – 2008.

1. An increase of 5% in visitor numbers from the baseline. This goal was not on target to be met.
2. 75 lifelong learning events to be organised. 60 events had been arranged so far and the target was expected to be achieved.

The proposal was to retain these indicators with revised targets for 2008 – 2009.

An outline of the budget was given for the year 2007 – 2008. The projected outturn for 2007 – 2008 revenue budget was neutral. Details were provided concerning capital and grant funding.

Of note the committee was informed that a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding was successful and a grant of £250,000 had been awarded to conserve and promote the British Steel Archive.

Details were provided of acquisitions, outreach events and conservation work carried out. Of note, the committee was informed that the Friends of the Archives had purchased a 13th Century document for the Teesside Archives that referred to Nunthorpe. The rarity of the document was discussed and the Committee thanked Friends of the Archives for the contribution.

ORDERED

1. That the Performance Report for 2007 – 2008 be noted.
2. That the local indicators for 2007 - 2008 be approved.